

As regards church accommodation also we are very badly off. The Barbadoes street church is much too small for present requirements besides being situated in a very out-of-the-way place. When it was built the old proverb in regard to placing the church in the middle of the parish was completely ignored. The city is laid out as a square, and instead of the church being in a central or prominent position it is in one corner, at the junction of the East and West Belts. This is obviously a most inconvenient position. The old building would do very well as a secondary church, or for a school, but it is altogether unworthy of being the Cathedral church in a large parish like Christchurch. A new church is an absolute necessity, and it is to be hoped that when a new one is built that it will not be erected upon the old obscure site. One such mistake is quite enough in the history of a parish.

I mentioned in my last letter that we rarely have lectures, or entertainments of a similar intellectual kind, of an Irish or Catholic character in Christchurch. I believe there is to be a change in this respect. I have been told that Mr. Nolan, whose eloquence and patriotism I have frequently mentioned, is preparing a lecture upon "Ireland at the time of the Union and since." Mr. Nolan has promised to deliver this lecture before the Catholic Literary Society at an early date. Mr. Nolan's knowledge of Irish matters, and the enthusiasm which he will bring to bear upon his subject are guarantees that he will give the Society a literary and historical treat.

Mr. Robert Loughnan, the well-known genial and able journalist, also promises to deliver a lecture upon an interesting subject immediately after the close of the Parliamentary session. This is certainly a start in the right direction, and gives promise of better things in the future than we have had in the past.

The Magdalen Asylum was opened on Sunday under the most auspicious circumstances. The day was gloriously fine, and before two o'clock an immense crowd of people thronged the lawn before the Asylum, at the southern end of which was a long line of vehicles of every description. The appearance of the Lincoln road from town to the Asylum recalled reminiscences of Cup or Derby Day. Numbers of pedestrians lined the footpaths, and the centre of the road was occupied with traps, drags, and horses. Shortly after two o'clock Dr. Grimes, accompanied by Fathers Ginaty, Kickham, Haibwachs, and Breben, arrived at the Asylum. Immediately after a procession was formed, consisting of the clerical party, the nuns of the Good Shepherd, the penitents, and the people, and the ceremony of blessing the institution was proceeded with. This being concluded, the Bishop addressed the assemblage from a platform which was erected at the back of the building. He took for his text the command laid by the Apostle upon the whole human race, that they should love one another. His Lordship preached an earnest, impressive, and eloquent sermon upon the beauty of fraternal charity. He dwelt at length upon the absolute heroism of the nuns of the Good Shepherd, those noble-minded ladies who have abandoned home and friends in order to devote their lives to the reclamation of the most degraded of their sex. Nowhere, he held, outside the Catholic Church, were such splendid examples of obedience to the apostolic command to be found, as these which were afforded by the lives and labours of the Nuns of the Good Shepherd. Dr. Grimes warmly eulogised Father Ginaty for having established such an institution, and concluded by urging upon all those present to give practical evidence of their sympathy, with the work that was carried on within the walls, henceforward the sacred walls, of Mount Magdala Asylum.

Father Ginaty, whose appearance was the signal for considerable applause, made a neat and witty speech. He thanked the contractors and any one who had in any way assisted him in his great work. He was especially eulogistic in regard to the Press of the Colony. In every part of New Zealand, he stated, in which he had travelled, the Press had given him most valuable assistance. He had received, in fact, from every one the most cordial approval of the work in which he was engaged. The large cheques of the wealthy and the humbler donations of the poor were always given to the Mount Magdala Asylum, accompanied by the most hearty expression of good-will and earnest prayers for success to the institution. Father Ginaty interspersed his address with a great many humorous asides and hints to get out their purses. He succeeded in putting the crowd in a good temper and the collectors went among them with very happy results.

After Benediction in the Convent chapel the doors of the asylum were thrown open to the people, who at once, took advantage of the privilege afforded them, and proceeded to inspect the building. Expressions of satisfaction were heard upon all sides at the internal arrangements of the institution. As I have before described the asylum in the TABLET it is unnecessary to do so now.

Towards five o'clock the majority of the people took their departure for town, and no doubt left Mount Magdala very much amazed at the change which had been wrought in the poor despised outcasts in converting them from a life of crime and degradation to one of peace and respectability.

The appearance of the penitents on Sunday, as they passed round in the procession, clad in decent garments, and singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin was such as must have gone far to convince the utilitarians, that the reformation of the most hardened human being is not an impossibility.

In the evening after Vespers, Father Cummings preached a sermon appropriate to the occasion, upon the parable of the Good Shepherd seeking the sheep which had strayed from His fold. He drew a powerful picture of the young girl led away from her early home, and betrayed by the falseness and cruelty of man whom God had created to be her guide and her protector. He depicted the agony of the poor, lost, sinful girl, as with all her earthly hopes blighted she stood in the world alone. She could not go back to the old home of her innocent girlhood, the gulf of sin yawned widely between her and it. She dared not attempt to cross that gulf. She knew if she did that she would only do so to be scorned and rejected, and thrust forth again upon the world by the friends who once loved her, but with whom she could never more claim kindred. What remained for her then? Her only resource

was to sink deeper and deeper into sin, or to end her life in the dark, deep, silent river. She was abandoned by all. No, not by all. One friend remained to her. The loving shepherd sought her, and called her now in order to gather her once more into the fold. It was to save such poor sinners, and to give a chance of leading a better life, to raise them from sin, and despair, and moral death, he said, that the institution which had been opened that day existed. He urged upon every man present who wished to help to repair the wrong inflicted by the stronger portion of the human race upon the weaker, to assist the work carried on at Mount Magdala. Every woman who grieved over the fall of members of her sex should also aid in this work. Some people might say that such an institution was premature. It was not premature. Beneath the golden crust of society there was corruption which threatened to decimate the human race. He instanced the immorality in cities like Sydney, and stated that he was shocked to find in a young colony like this such a state of affairs as that indicated by a petition presented to Parliament a short time ago for the prevention of juvenile crime.

At the conclusion of the sermon a collection was made in aid of the funds. Altogether the subscriptions for the day amounted to three hundred pounds in cash, and a considerable sum in promises. Mr. O'Mally, of Darfield, generously gave fifty pounds towards the Asylum.

The Bishop, after Benediction, in a few well-chosen, earnest words, expressed his heartfelt thanks to the congregation for having so nobly seconded the efforts of Father Ginaty in forwarding this great work.

## THE BISHOPS' DECLARATION.

(United Ireland, June 2.)

WE publish with heartfelt satisfaction the resolutions which the Irish Bishops have promulgated at the command of the Holy Office. They need only be read side by side with Bishop O'Dwyer's menacing and arrogant letter to see what a chasm divides him from the great body of the Irish Prelates. In the one manifesto there breathes throughout the spirit of aggressive hostility; in the other, an air of the mildest friendly mention is assumed candidly in obedience to spiritual discipline. The Irish people have the keenest appreciation of the difficulties by which their Bishops are encompassed in this unhappy matter. It would be cant to affect not to know that the action of the Holy Office is an affront to their deepest and most earnest convictions as to what is best for the moral as well as material interests of their people. On the other hand, disobedience to explicit instructions from the Holy Office would be an act of revolt from their disciplinary ecclesiastical duty. The pressure from the Vatican, of which every day's Roman telegrams in the anti-Irish papers in London gave us exultant notice, has been yielded to at least in a form from which the most virulent of our enemies will derive little consolation. The Bishops have spoken with heavy hearts words which do not exceed by a single syllable the requirements which rigorous orders imposed. Their declaration satisfies their sacred duty; it does not alter ours by a hair's breadth. So far from deriving discouragement from the Bishops' resolutions, it is impossible to peruse them without seeing that their transparent moral is that, with the very best intentions, the recent interference of the Holy Office was most sadly misplaced and ill-grounded, and that, whatever excesses of language individuals may have fallen into in resenting it, the resolutions of the Catholic members and the tremendous outburst of lay Catholic feeling throughout the Irish world which has followed them demand no word of reprobation from those who would naturally be the most sensitive guardians of Irish Catholicity. "In obedience to the commands of the Holy See"—the phrase with which the first resolution opens—is the keynote of the whole. That the Decree of the Holy Office was "intended" to affect the domain of morals alone is a proposition to which the resolutions of the Catholic members gave hearty assent. It was the purpose with which it was sought by English intriguers, and "the uses to which it was being put by unscrupulous enemies of the Holy See and the Irish people" that the Mansion House resolutions branded as political; and against the assertion that the Decree was so sought, and is being so used, the Bishops do not offer a word of remonstrance. The second resolution simply recites our Holy Father's "direct assurances" as to his "intention," "hope," and "purpose" in condemning the Plan of Campaign and boycotting—an intention and a purpose whose *bona fides* no responsible Catholic politician ever dreamed of impugning. How far the effect corresponds with the intention may be inferred from the Bishops' eloquent silence as to the contents of the Decree or as to its enforcement. The same desire to safeguard the Holy Father's august person from the taint of disrespectful political strife is the burden of the third resolution, and the desire is not more earnestly expressed than it was expressed by every prominent speaker at last Sunday's monster meetings. Finally, the resolutions reminding all who may be called upon to deal with this most painful and delicate subject of our Holy Father's inalienable and divine prerogative to speak with authority on all questions appertaining to faith and morals only embodies a principle which the Mansion House resolutions expressly recognised as the base of all Catholic doctrine; while no word of rebuke is uttered of that other principle which the Catholic members and the Catholic laity are contending for with a passionate earnestness that has shaken the country to its core—the principle, namely, that "the Irish people cannot recognise any right in the Holy See to interfere with the Irish people in the management of their political affairs." From beginning to end of the Bishops' declaration there is not a sentence to which the most fiery Nationalist cannot yield a grateful and affectionate assent; while nobody will welcome more heartily than those responsible for the National Protest which is in progress the Bishops' weighty admonition as to the reverence for high and holy things which should influence our every word in a situation in which every feeling is only too apt to find ill-judged expression. The difference between Bishop O'Dwyer's letter and the Bishops' resolutions is